

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 21, 2003

CONTACT:

or

Israel Klein

Benn Tannenbaum

(202) 225-2836

MARKEY PLAN FOR DENUCLEARIZING N. KOREA GETS BOOST FROM BUSH ADMINISTRATION

No Nuclear Reactor Construction Using KEDO Money

WASHINGTON, DC- Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Taskforce on Nonproliferation and a senior member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security, yesterday received a response from the Bush Administration regarding Rep. Markey's plan for solving the crisis on the Korean Peninsula. The letter, written by Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs Paul V. Kelly, supported many of the suggestions made by Rep. Markey.

"This letter suggests that the Bush Administration is starting to move in the right direction on North Korea," said Rep. Markey, adding, "They are finally taking this matter to the Security Council, where it belongs, and they are distancing themselves from the ill-considered light water reactor proposal and suggesting other energy alternatives might be made available if North Korea will dismantle its nuclear program."

Markey added, "Still, I would have preferred to see the Administration announce the end of the ill-considered North Korea light water reactor project once and for all. It's time to recognize that Kim Jong Il doesn't want nuclear reactors for electricity, he wants them as future as nuclear bomb factories."

Assistant Secretary Kelly indicates in the letter, "This administration shares many of the views expressed in your letter." He says, "The U.S. is prepared to consider a bold initiative in relations with North Korea, which includes a number of steps toward normalcy in our relationship." The letter goes on to say, "the North must first dismantle its nuclear weapons program in a verifiable and irreversible manner, and must cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and meet its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT)."

With respect to Representatives Markey's proposals for assistance and security assurances to North Korea, the Kelly letter notes that President Bush has stated the U.S. has no intention of invading North Korea and that it will not use food as a weapon against North Korea in the current crisis. He also notes, "other assistance is possible if we can resolve the nuclear problem."

With respect to the status of U.S. support for the transfer of two light water reactors to North Korea, Assistant Secretary Kelly states in the letter that the Administration's funding request for FY 2003 is \$3.5 million and is only to cover administrative costs; it is not to "fund shipments of heavy fuel oil or light water reactor construction." The letter emphasizes that "Keeping KEDO [the Korean Economic Development Organization] in existence, should the U.S. and its partners decide to do so, in no way commits the U.S. to KEDO's current scope of work, including the light water reactors."

Rep. Markey concluded, "It's long past time this matter was brought to the United Nations Security Council and International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors were returned to North Korea. We do not have the luxury of waiting to address the threat posed by North Korea until we have resolved the crisis in Iraq. We need a diplomacy that works multilaterally to resolve both proliferation threats."

Copies of this and all other nonproliferation-related correspondence, including the Markey Plan for North Korea, can be found at <http://www.house.gov/markey/>.